

May 14, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in regards to the request for public comment on docket number PHMSA-2007-27607.

The public notice did not allow much time to respond to the request by Southeast Supply Header, LLC (SESH) in much detail. This is a technical issue that will require much study. However, within the time frame allotted, I am submitting this request for denial of the waiver request by SESH. The following numbered items are the reasons for my disapproval. I am told that the PHMSA is required to respond to all submissions from the American public. Thank you in advance for your reply.

- (1) I believe that the safety of American citizens should not be compromised for the financial gain of any company. Granting this company the ability to operate its pipeline at a 0.8 design factor in Class 1 areas, beyond what is established by the government, is an attempt of this company to transfer more product at a cheaper installed cost. Natural gas prices are at a historical high. The installed cost of this pipeline will be minor compared to the revenues it will generate. Therefore, this company can afford to install a "thicker", more robust system in an effort to keep my family and other citizens safe.
- (2) As you know, ASME B31.8 is the accepted code for pipeline design in the United States. My interpretation of that code says that the request by SESH is not in agreement with the ASME standards. Until the code is changed, our Federal Government should use that code as it is written. ASME is recognized worldwide as a technical leader in mechanical engineering design. That society has a long history of technically sound standards. Our government has chosen to enforce ASME 31.8 as the requirement for new installations. I'm assuming that decision was made because ASME has much greater expertise. I believe that assumption is a good one. Why should our government override this standard produced by the world's best engineers?
- (3) I've read some submissions to the PHMSA that ASME B31.8 is too conservative. My viewpoint is that it is not conservative enough. Technical calculations are based on assumed conditions. However, practical applications seldom prove to have all of those conditions as assumed. For instance, the metallurgical properties are assumed to be uniform throughout the entire pipeline. It is nearly impossible for that to happen in the manufacturing process. In addition, pipelines have to endure many varying conditions. Some of these include: Pipe manufacturer quality, Testing quality, Varying soil conditions, Chemical attack inside and outside the pipe, Hydrogen embrittlement, Natural occurrences like earthquakes (which do happen in the southeast).
As an employee of an industrial facility, over the last 2 years I have seen a troublesome trend in poor manufacturer quality. At my facility, we do not have enough inspectors to catch all of the issues that we are now seeing. It would be

very, very unlikely that the pipeline company inspectors can catch all manufacturing defects. A pressure test of the line will not catch all of the defects. Therefore, a more robust design and lower operating pressures will enhance the chances of a long, safe operation of the pipeline.

- (4) The area of pipeline by my house is not a Class 1 area. According to what I have read, the following has to be true in order for this area to be Class 1: (1) No more than 10 dwellings within 200 yards on a 1 mile stretch, (2) The future growth in the area must be considered because it may soon become a highly populated area. There are more than 10 dwellings along the route near my residence. After Hurricane Katrina, the housing market has grown tremendously. Land is selling as soon as it goes on the market. I am asking the PHMSA to perform its own study of the area near my home before it considers approving the request for waiver.
- (5) SESH says that the pipeline will be safe at the higher pressure by “incorporating current technology into operation, maintenance.....”. I say that no one can inspect 100% safety and reliability into any system. As a worker in an industrial facility, we are taught that safety and reliability begins with design. You must engineer the best possible solution from the beginning.
 - a) I scanned the PHMSA website. I noticed a high volume of fines levied against pipeline companies. I saw that most of the fines were for violations in maintenance and inspection. If these companies cannot follow the rules when they are making large profits, how can they be trusted to follow the rules when margins get squeezed? I know from experience that maintenance and technical budgets are typically the first to be cut when profits decline. In addition, the fines levied by PHMSA were very small monetary amounts. Most companies can pay those small fines without blinking an eye.
 - b) No technology exists that can scan every millimeter of pipeline to detect issues. I read a recent incident in 2007 in Alabama (from your website) where a leak occurred only a few months after a pipeline company ran a SMART pig through the line. This testing should a clean bill of health. It did not catch the issue. Consider the BP pipeline in Alaska. BP ran SMART pigs periodically, but it did not catch the impending issue. Companies will run at the brink of a disastrous event in order to maximize profits.
 - c) I am guessing that the PHMSA is understaffed. That means that is cannot inspect every mile of all pipelines nor review all of the tests, maintenance, etc done by any pipeline operational company. So, PHMSA would have to concentrate on pipelines near large cities and make random inspections of the rural pipeline areas. That would mean that the pipeline near my home would not receive the attention of pipelines near Atlanta or Birmingham. Please consider this when you make your decision.
 - d) According to PHMSA’s data, over the past 20 years, there have been 2,886 incidents resulting in 349 deaths, 1,467 injuries and \$859,394,353 in property damages (not including litigation costs). Installing the pipeline within the existing code is a better way to limit the exposure to incidents.

- (6) I would like for companies like SESH to be forced to bury a new pipeline in an existing right of way in this area. That way, there will be two companies who will be monitoring the areas. Neither of the companies could afford for the other company to have an incident because it could affect their income. They would be forced to work together. A fine against one company may also result in a fine against the other. This would increase the odds of our safety.

Thank you for your consideration of the concerns and issues that I raised above.

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